

Kansas Association of Teachers of English (KATE)

KATE Conference Proposal
Conference Theme: "Share Stories. Shape Change."

Your Name: Katherine Mason Cramer

School or Organization: Wichita State University

Position/Grade Level/Subject Area: Associate Professor of English Education

School or Organizational Address: 1845 Fairmount St., Wichita, KS 67260-0028

Preferred Mailing Address (if different from address above)

Include Address, street, city, state and zip code

Primary email address: Katie.Cramer@wichita.edu

Phone number: 316-978-6933

Presentation Title: The T* in LGBT*: Disrupting Gender Normative School Culture through Young Adult Literature

Presentation's intended audience *

Please check all that might apply

- Elementary (K-5)
- Middle (6-8)
- High (9-12)
- Post-Secondary
- Administration
- Other:

Presentation's Area of Focus or Specialty *

Please check all that might apply

- Writing skills
- Reading skills
- Literary interpretation/analysis
- Research/Inquiry
- Speaking/Listening
- New teachers
- Multicultural literature/experience
- LGBTQ
- Interdisciplinary
- Technology
- Other:

Full Description/Explanation of Expected Presentation Content

This is to give conference chairs as complete an idea as possible what your presentation will include

While popular TV shows such as *Glee*, *Orange is the New Black*, and *Transparent* introduce audiences to “unique issues faced by trans people—like safe access to bathrooms and hormone therapy” (Morris, 2015), most of our schools are not safe spaces for trans* and gender creative teens to come out (Kosciw, et al, 2014).

In *The Right to Be Out: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in America’s Public Schools*, Stuart Biegel (2010) explains that teachers and students must realize that unlike gays and lesbians, who may opt to come out over time and in different contexts of their lives, “transgender persons cannot come out gradually unless they change environments. Once they begin presenting differently as part of their transition process, they are immediately and abruptly out to those who knew them previously” (pp. 178-9). In addition, “as the most misunderstood of any identifiable group in existence today,” transgender people often cannot expect support from all members of their family, friends, and community (Biegel, 2010, p. 180).

When discussing transgender youth in K-12 public schools, Biegel also notes that “the great majority of Americans have never interacted knowingly with a transgender person, and even fewer have developed any sort of close personal relationship with one. Thus, educators seeking to move forward in this area would do well to identify memoirs, films, novels, poetry, and other works of art that document the experiences of those who identify under the transgender umbrella” (p. 185).

In the English language arts classroom, the field of young adult literature (YAL) offers critical opportunities across a variety of genres for teens and teachers alike to learn more about trans* and gender creative identities and/or to have their own experiences mirrored back to them.

This session will provide a brief history of YAL with trans* content and explore strategies for helping students identify and critique gender normative practices in their school and home communities. Participants will be introduced to specific texts, learning activities, and assessments and will be invited to contribute their own ideas toward cultivating schools and communities that are more knowledgeable about, welcoming toward, and appreciative of all gender identities.

References

Biegel, S. (2010). *The right to be out: Sexual orientation and gender identity in America’s public schools*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.

Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Palmer, N. A., & Boesen, M. J. (2014). *The 2013 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation’s schools*. New York: GLSEN.

MacGillivray, I. K. (2000). Educational equity for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and queer/questioning students: The demands of democracy and social justice for America’s schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 32(3), 303-323.

Miller, sj. (2015). A queer literacy framework promoting (a)gender and (a)sexuality self-determination and justice. *English Journal*, 104(5), 37-44.

Morris, R. (2015, January 12). Transgender 13-year-old Zoey having therapy. *BBC News US & Canada*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com>

Presentation Description for the Conference Program *

This is the proposal description as you'd like to have it appear in the conference program. PLEASE keep this description under 100 words.

Too often, our schools are not safe places for transgender teens to come out. This session will provide a brief history of young adult literature with trans* content, and participants will evaluate strategies for helping students identify and critique gender normative practices in their school and home communities. Additionally, participants will be introduced to specific texts, learning activities, and assessments and engage in dialogue on how we can cultivate schools and communities that are more knowledgeable about, welcoming toward, and appreciative of all gender identities. Handouts and other resources will be provided. (92 words)

What day(s) are you available to present? * (Oct. 22 and/or Oct. 23)

Either day is fine.

If you anticipate any technology needs for your presentation, please describe those below.

- Projector
- Screen
- Extension cord

If you would be interested in facilitating a workshop, discussion or roundtable, briefly describe the topic you'd like to facilitate.

- I'd be happy to help with any of these, *if needed*. My areas of expertise are young adult literature and writing instruction.